

## Effects of Anti-audism on the Social Development of Deaf Persons in Limbe City Council Area

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**Abstract:** This study investigated the effects of anti-audism on the social development of Deaf persons in Limbe City Council Area. The Research Question was: What impact does anti-audism have on the social development of Deaf persons? A sequential explanatory design was used. The sample comprised 13 Deaf persons and 411 hearing people selected using snowball sampling technique. The instruments used were a questionnaire and an interview guide. Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistical tools and SPSS version 25.0 was used for advanced data cleaning. The hypotheses was tested using the Likelihood ratio test and the Chi-Square value was converted into Contingency Coefficient value interpreted on a scale of 0 to 1 to determine the impact size that the variable has on the dependent variable. The numerical value for the effect size,  $r_s$  ranges between -1 and +1 determining the extent to which the predictors influence the criterion.  $r_s = 0$  implies no effect size;  $r_s \leq 0.20$  is extremely low effect size;  $r_s = 0.20 - 0.39$  is low effect size;  $r_s = 0.40 - 0.59$  is moderate;  $r_s = 0.60 - 0.79$  is high;  $r_s = 0.80 - 0.99$  is very high and 1.00 implies a perfect effect size. The narrative analysis was used for qualitative data and findings presented using frequency distribution with all inferential statistics presented at 95% level of confidence interval with alpha set at 0.05 levels, accepting 5% margin of error. Descriptively, majority of respondent 96.6%, 97.4%, indicated that anti-audism promotes social development of Deaf persons. The p-values of the indicator was  $< 0.001 < 0.05$ , and the contingency coefficient being within 0.40-0.59 indicating moderate association. Anti-audism accounts for 29.0%, (Pseudo R-Square = 0.290). In response to the predictor, Deaf persons said they feel happy, good, fine, secured, welcomed, belonged, loved and accepted when their hearing neighbours regard them as equal humans beings, interact with Deaf persons, greet them in sign language or make effort to sign and that they feel included using applications like Whatsapp, Messenger, Facebook, Twiter and many as they connect them to the world. The researcher recommended that sign language be made compulsory for learners at all levels of education so that Deaf persons can feel belonging and maximally interact with everyone.

### Introduction

Living in a friendly neighbourhood is a form of security everyone yearns for. However, certain factors from the environment or from within oneself can hinder someone from such a privilege; hence compelling the individual to isolate him or herself from the members of the community. Over the years and everywhere, Deaf persons encounter a lot of barriers as they struggle to find their way through life in a hearing world. Moore (2012) says that growing up in a neighbourhood characterized by general community neglect negatively affects children's outcome over and above the effects of the family's socio-economic status. An individual's opinion of his or her environs regarding building trust in its people or feeling safe walking alone has a strong connection with the individual. Friendliness results in a desirable neighbourhood and friendly neighbours willingly offer help, treat everyone with care and love and then provide needed resources to the ones in need. Avenue Magazine, Mac Ewan University (2019) holds that when the walls are thin and people are

in the habit of visiting each other, it is difficult to find a moment of solitude, but the flipside is a building where nobody talks to anyone and everyone is isolated inside their units.

Among others, disability is a factor that can cause an individual to go into an involuntary seclusion. Such involuntary seclusion can be caused by the fact that the environment is not disability friendly; hence, adversely affect one's social development because the individual with disabilities may be feeling unsecured in an environment that is not disability friendly. Hearing Impairment (HIM) is one category of disabilities within the framework of special education. It is a generic term which describes any condition that reduces the hearing acuity of an individual and makes it difficult or impossible for him or her to perceive and interpret auditory signals or sounds (Okouyibo, 2006).

### **Research Objective**

To investigate the impact of anti-audism on the social development of Deaf persons.

### **Research Question**

What impact does anti-audism have on the social development of Deaf persons?

### **Hypothesis**

**H<sub>a</sub>:** Anti audism has a significant impact on the social development of Deaf persons.

**H<sub>o</sub>:** Anti audism has no significant impact on the social development of Deaf persons.

### **Operational Definition of Terms**

#### **Anti-audism**

The concept anti-audism cannot be better understood without prior knowledge of the term audism. Audism is the belief that one is superior to Deaf persons or that spoken language is superior to Sign language based on one's ability to hear or to behave like hearing people (Tom, 1977). Audism as used in this work describes an attitude based on illogical thinking that judges, labels, and limits human beings on the ability to hear and use speech; thus resulting in a negative stigma towards anyone who does not hear nor uses speech. Anti-audism opposes all forms of audism such as the belief that hearing people are superior to Deaf persons and spoken language to sign language. Anti-audism regards both languages as equal social gifts from God.

#### **Anti-Audism and Its Impact on the Social Development of Deaf Persons**

Audism from Tom Humphries' point of view as already stated above is the belief that one is superior to Deaf persons or that spoken language is superior to Sign language based on one's ability to hear or to behave like hearing people (Humphries, 1977). Jamie (2020) defines audism as a form of discrimination, prejudice, or general lack of willingness to accommodate those who cannot hear; while those who hold such views are called audists. Making meaningless or senseless signs when one is with a person who identifies with Deaf culture are manifestations of audism. Another form is the outright rejection to learn sign language as most persons commonly and snarly ask: "to do what with it?" or "what do I have in common with Deaf people?" Audism in a lay man's definition can be explained as any negative attitude manifested towards a Deaf person or sign language.

#### **The Origin of the Term Audism**

The Traditional Western views argue that language which originated from the Latin word tongue could only be vocal-auditory in nature because it uses the tongue. This viewpoint planted the seeds of audism (Bolinger, 1946). Since sign language violates the vocal-auditory schema, signing only served to further validate historical views of Deaf individuals as having less than human status. Brueggemann (1999) sums up these historical writings as: "speech is language and language is human; therefore Deaf people are inhuman, and deafness is a problem" (p. 11). Humphrey coined the term audism to describe an audio centric assumptions and attitudes of supremacy over any form of communication other than vocal-auditory. As racism is linked to differences in ethnicities or skin colour, audism arises out of what is thought to be the main difference between humans and non-humans which is language (Hauser, Chomsky & Fitch, 2002). The ability of humans to create

abstract and grammatical systems of language is considered the key asset that has permitted humans a dominant role in the animal kingdom (Berwick, Friederici, Chomsky, & Bolhuis, 2013).

H-Dirksen (2003) exposes how historical and philosophical constructions of language and being, have created what Jacques called phono centrism. Jacques' deconstruction of the Western notion of language provides a lens through which one can better see what provided fertile ground out of which individual and institutional audism have flourished. The term audism is nothing new; it has been in hiding for some time loitering in the silent space between audiovisual and audit until 1975 when a Deaf scholar, Tom Humphries, decided it was time to name the discrimination against Deaf persons. He then coined the term audism that would be part of the currency of discussions on human rights, deaf education and employment.

The term audism is used to describe a negative attitude toward Deaf or hard of hearing people. Audism is much like racism, sexism, ageism and other isms which may be intentional or unintentional on the part of hearing people. The belief that Deaf persons are helpless, inferior, vulnerable, unintelligent, or unable to speak for themselves have long dominated our social consciousness, and those beliefs are perpetuated in many areas of society and negatively influence how we frame the discourse about Deaf people (Aimee, et. al. 2013). In his book titled *The Mask of Benevolence: Disabling the Deaf Community*, Harlan (1992) regards the term audism as the hearing people's way of dominating, restructuring, and exercising authority over the deaf community.

### **Manifestation of Audism**

Audism is manifested in different forms in various societies and can affect someone's work, education, living circumstances, or simply be infused in casual conversation and can be manifested by both hearing and Deaf people (Verywell Health, 2020). The term audism comes to play when someone who knows sign language refuses to sign to a Deaf individual, verbally reprimands a Deaf person for a weakness, insists that Deaf people adapt to the hearing community, is unwilling to accommodate their communication needs and lowers expectations in regards to education or work abilities because of their inability to perceive auditory signal. Deaf people experience audism when they are denied the rights to own property, to have children for fear of increasing the population of Deaf people, being denied to drive cars, being rarely treated with the dignity that should come with being human (H-Dirksen, 2003).

Jaime & Samuel (2017) hold that Audism can be intentionally, unintentionally and unconsciously manifested. They hold that intentional audism is blatant; an example of which is the response of Ronnie Suttan during a 2009 legislative debate in the North Carolina General Assembly regarding whether Deaf individuals should be allowed to serve on a jury or not. He responded that he was never going to let a Deaf person serve on a jury adding that no other responsible attorney would allow that. Unintentional audism is said to be audist behaviours that are often unconscious especially to those who perpetrate them. Dysconscious audism refers to a Deaf individual's internalization of audist attitudes. A Deaf person may give in to the ideology that, because hearing society is dominant, it is more appropriate than the values and norms of the Deaf community. In this way, both Deaf and hard of hearing individuals can also spread audism by striving to behave like hearing persons, while avoiding or despising those who embrace a culturally Deaf identity.

The Canadian Association of the Deaf (CAD, 2015) notes that audism occurs at all levels of government and society in the form of direct, indirect and systematic discrimination against Deaf people; much of which arises from ignorance and thoughtlessness. In our contemporary world, audism is established when hearing people assume control over the Deaf and rendering them powerless by making decisions about their language, education, and the services they will need, with little or no opinion from Deaf persons. To this effect Harlan (1992) says hearing people have enormous control over Deaf people by making decisions and policies about their language, educational options, service provision, employment and other aspects of Deaf persons' daily life. To express their disapproval, most Deaf persons as well as many others with various disabilities continue to quote the title of a book written by James Charlton "Noting About Us Without Us" (James, 1998). It is a manifestation of audism to look at the occasionally weak writing skills of Deaf

persons and assume that they are unintelligent without considering the fact that written language is their second language coupled with the fact that they were perhaps never provided with strong foundation in sign language as most of them come from hearing families (CAD, 2015). Therefore relating the recognition of someone as a fellow human being to auditory language is manifesting audistic behaviour which allows the subordination and oppression of Sign Language.

The National Association of the Deaf in the U.S. includes the elimination of audism, linguism, racism, and other forms of discrimination in their statement on community values. It then advocates that hearing people should be able to unpack their privileges, one of which is hearing privilege when interacting with Deaf persons. To insist on the use of cochlear implants and hearing aids is a mild way of asking Deaf persons to accommodate hearing persons and become more like hearing people which may result in the Deaf person feeling less human instead of adapting hearing people to the needs of Deaf persons (Aimee, et. al. 2013).

Drawing insight from the above forms of audism, the belief that assistive technological devices are meant to serve only Deaf persons to fit in the society is a form of audism, for everyone ought to be aware that everyone needs to use assistive technology to be able to relate and identify with those who depend on it for interaction. In the case of Deaf persons, the hearing can erase audism and assume anti-audist behaviours that provide accessibility to Deaf individuals to explore and fit in the environment. Hearing communities need to unpack their privileges in order to assume the characteristics of deaf friendly communities.

### **Extinguishing Audism and Promoting Anti-Audism**

H-Dirksen (2003) holds that audism gathers together what has been there all along as isolated instances, events, and experiences and unifies them into a single concept that functions like a basket of disparate experiences with one thing in common, namely, the discrimination against Deaf individuals based on hearing ability. He adds that once these discriminatory practices are gathered in a single place, theorists of audism may then have the benefit of pulling these experiences out of the basket and examining them closely, discuss and debate on them, analyze and explore them; and ultimately, may begin to understand them. It will also enable them to be aware of what underlies them all, and locate their sources. Such increased awareness of audism may guard against audism on several levels, from its sources to its daily manifestations (H-Dirksen, 2003).

Now just as the Istanbul neighbourhood recently did in Turkey, switching from being less concern to accommodate Moharrem their Deaf neighbour, other communities can copy and apply in their societies. If such is done everywhere, environments would become so deaf friendly and various forms of audism would begin to decline. The best way to combat audism is to identify with Deaf persons and especially learn and use sign language. The roots of audism as H-Dirksen puts it, run so deep and are so persistent that they have implications not only on the Deaf persons and those who work and live with them, but also on anyone interested in issues of language, human rights, and the question of human nature.

The endeavour or the question of how to unearth the roots of audism traces its answer from the source and it is important to ask with H-Dirksen (2003); ‘where do so many individuals acquire their audist attitudes and behaviours and what is the nearly invisible thread that weaves them together into a systematic pattern that warrants a term to describe it? Humphrey the proponent of the term gives a better response to the question by pointing towards a larger system of oppression saying: “audism appears in the class structure of the Deaf culture where those at the top are those whose language is that of the hearing culture or closest to it. Such structural oppression is difficult to see because it usually veils itself behind justifications and rationalizations” (Humphries, 1975).

Lane (1992) draws on the work of the French philosopher Michel Foucault (1975), interrogates the organizations that attempt to care for the Deaf but actually perpetuate the conditions of disability; while educational and medical institutions have assumed authority over Deaf persons, claiming to act in their best interests but do not let them have a say in matters that concern them the most. One would hope that specially designed institutions would be vigilant in preventing such prevalent

audism; the reality as stated above is quite different as audism instead prevails in the institutions that serve Deaf population.

Another form of audism worth exploring is metaphysical audism when we exercise our metaphysical nature by asking questions such as, what is life? What is nature? What is God? What is human? It is the last of these questions that opens up the conditions that ultimately beget audism (H-Dirksen, 2003, p. 241). What binds everything human into one is language, though saying that language is a distinct human trait does not lead to audism but the way it is defined as language with its origin from the Latin word *tongue* that leads to audism. According to H-Dirksen that definition is incomplete and men have been operating on the incomplete definition of language for several ages.

Once speech is believed to be language and vice versa, the impression of what it means to be considered human turns to be closely tied with speech. In this light Brueggemann (1999) sums up the Western audist orientation saying: Language is human; speech is language; therefore Deaf people are inhuman and deafness is a problem (p. 11). Humans have identified themselves as the speaking animals for ages, and if one cannot speak, then he or she is akin to human in body but to animal in mind. In this orientation, we see ourselves as becoming humans through speech. It is within this orientation “language is human and speech is language” that Deaf people have frequently been described as animals (Yves, 1980).

Deaf persons have over the years been regarded more as animals than less humans as can be seen from the expressions of some pro-audist beings in the past. Lewis Dudley one of the earliest practitioners of audism wrote about uneducated Deaf persons: “how dull they are in general; how little do they differ from animals, humans in shape, but only half-human in attributes” (Bauman, 2003). “To be human was to speak and to sign was a step downward in the scale of being human” (Baynton, 1996, p. 55). A clergy, Sicard Roch-Ambrose (1984) asserted even more vehemently that Deaf people were even lower than animals prior to education, referring to the uneducated Deaf pupil as “a perfect nonentity, a living automaton. The Deaf person lacks even that unfailing instinct directing animals destined to have only that as their guide” (Dirksen, 2011).

Discrimination is an unpleasant practicality for all people with disabilities, and in the situation of Deaf people, discrimination is also embedded in audism. Discrimination seems to continue being manifested against Deaf people in the workplace and when accessing vital services that most people take for granted such as education, employment, health care, and housing. No matter the form with which it is manifested, discrimination closes the door to equal opportunity, to fundamental right of citizenship and democracy itself. Deaf people as members of the same community have the right to fair and equitable treatment, to participate equally in the workplace, and to communicate fully and freely with everyone. In this respect, all sectors need to ensure and promote discrimination-free environments.

### **Anti-Audism**

Irrespective of all the faces displayed by audism, all humans whether hearing or Deaf, are born with the equal capacity to receive and produce manual language, but not all humans are born with capacity to receive and produce speech. Imbedded in every human being, is the potential or ability to learn and use skills of nonverbal communication. It is therefore important for all hearing people to be conscious that embedded in them are the signing and speaking potentials. Given all that has been explained above in regard to audism, anti-audism therefore means assuming a behaviour or an attitude that opposes all forms of audism. According to CHS (2013) anti-audism seeks to address and remove inappropriate beliefs and attitude systems that are based on the ability to hear, which result in differential treatment towards those with hearing impairment. This policy includes the following expectations: Be on guard against inappropriate auditized belief or attitude systems that may directly or indirectly, consciously or unwittingly promote, sustain, or establish differential treatment or advantage for some people and disadvantage for others.

Kara (2018) advises against practicing tokenism. That is the practice of hiring a few members of the minority groups for relatively powerless positions in order to create an impression of having an

inclusive and equitable organization when in reality the individuals have little or no influence in the organization. These individuals are at the same time, seen as representatives of the group to which they belong and, as a result, their thoughts, beliefs and actions are likely to be taken as typical of all in their group. Anti-audism can be established when hearing people stop discriminating against Deaf persons. If everyone could be on guard against any behaviour that has traces of discrimination and inequality when Deaf persons are concerned, sooner or later an anti-audist society would naturally be given birth to. It is in the interest of the researcher to advocate for anti-audism in her contemporary society so as to enable Deaf persons interact with hearing people and develop in accordance to the social norms of the society in which they live.

## **Empirical Review**

### **Anti-Audism and the Social Development of Deaf Persons**

Noel Patrick in March 2021 carried out a study on the topic: Opportunity blocked: Deaf people, employment and sociology of audism in Dublin Ireland. Noel made use of a qualitative approach, a survey research design, a purposive sampling technique and a sample size of 8 well educated Deaf adults all fluent in Irish Sign Language (ISL) and of ages ranging from 35 to 57 years old. He made use of an interview guide for data collection. Noel's key questions that guided his study were: Can you tell us about your employment discrimination? What are the effects of audism on your life and career opportunities? What did you do about your experience of discrimination? Why and how did you choose that course of action?

Noel grouped the findings of his study into individual, institutional, deaf domain and internalized audism. Regarding individual audism, the response was that hearing people believe Deaf people are incompetent, dependent and unproductive. To support this belief, one of his participants said he applied for a job as an accountant clerk but lost it because he was not interviewed based on his competences in accountancy but on whether he could work without help from colleagues or communicate with colleagues. As regard institutionalize audism, Noel's Deaf persons encounter a systematic discrimination in which they are denied employment opportunities offered to hearing people. Noel says a Deaf applicant saw an advert and judged himself qualified for the requirement and applied, but once his disability was noticed his file was removed from the list while the hearing applicants remained in contest for the same job.

Concerning audism in Deaf domain, the findings were that most deaf service organizations are run by hearing people and no Deaf manager or director. His findings also showed that Deaf people also shared accounts of internalizing negative comments from teachers about their future career prospects. Taking for example the experience of one participant who said while in school she dreamed of becoming a nurse but the teacher told her she should train to become a cook or a dress maker because of her deafness. She believed her teacher all along and finally abandoned the idea.

Noel's study indicates that employers' audist attitude acts as a significant barrier to employment opportunities for Deaf people. This proves that Deaf people are at a serious disadvantage when competing with hearing people in the job market. In recommendation Noel Patrick says that his work is the first to be carried out on audism in Ireland and so a comparable study needs to be carried out elsewhere. His study confirms the existence of audism among hearing people.

Rhona and Helen carried out a study on the topic: Barriers to Access: Employment Issues for Local Deaf People at Newcastle They made use of a qualitative research, a survey research design and a purposive sampling technique with a sample size of nine Deaf persons 4 males and 5 females between 26 to 35 years of age. An interview guide was used for data collection. Rhona and Helen wanted to know if the expectations of respondents as children of working adults would reflect the low expectations that parents and professionals do instil in Deaf children.

In response, 90% of respondents said that they had dreamed of high profile works such as actor or designer when they left school but were told by school or parents that certain career options they were interested in would not be possible due to their deafness (Rhona & Helen, 2008). Their findings also suggested that all participants had been employed at some point in a range of jobs but

their experiences within a hearing environment proved to be a challenge with regular communication breakdowns and exclusion resulting in isolation and depression. Rhona and Helen's findings also showed that majority of their respondents believed that being deaf makes it more difficult for them to find a job as most often they were never even called for to come for an interview on numerous jobs applied for. From the responses of Deaf persons, one gathers that despite their deafness they were competent and qualified to be employed but the hearing people failed to accommodate the communication needs of those Deaf persons thereby making their expectations to reflect the low expectations that their parents and professionals do instil in Deaf children. Rhona and Helen's study reveals a lot of audist behaviours and deaf-unfriendliness. The researcher in the current study seeks to get rid of such behaviours and help hearing people to accommodate the communication needs of Deaf persons so that Deaf persons can enjoy the privileges and share the same opportunities with hearing people in their community.

Brianna Daisy conducted a study in 2008 on the topic: Deaf persons in a hearing world; a qualitative study on cultural identity issues at the University of New Hampshire in Durham. She made use of a survey research design and a sample of five Deaf persons for the study using a semi-structured interview guide for data collection and the coding analysis to analyze data. As major findings, her five participants all talked about the stereotype behaviours held by some hearing people that Deaf people cannot be productive members of the workforce, or that they have lower-skilled and lower paying jobs when compared to their hearing counterparts. Her study revealed that many people view deaf education as inferior and Deaf people as being incapable of acquiring the same education as hearing students. The overall findings of her study was that there is a number of factors that affect the identity development of Deaf individuals who live in a hearing world as all her participants reported that the family, Deaf peers, school setting, and society are the most influential factors in their lives in terms of positive or negative self-image.

Brianna (2008) says the experiences that Deaf individuals go through in childhood often affect the way they view deafness for years to come as one of her Deaf participants said, that once they go to a college and meet a lot of Deaf students, they have a hard time going back home and usually end up not going back home. They rather move to a place where there is a big Deaf community. The researcher in the present study believes that if the environment is cleared of audism, Deaf students would not have any hard time going back home to live among hearing people. She therefore embarks on erasing audism from the neighbourhoods where there are Deaf persons, and for an environment shaped by anti-audism to exist, the researcher perceives that it is more about making the hearing to see the abilities and potentials embedded in Deaf persons so as to be able to overcome all forms of audism.

Brianna recommended that future research should expand on her study, have a larger sample size made up of both male and female subjects who come from different parts of the country with different ethnic backgrounds and a greater age range. Equally that future studies should include other family members in the research in an effort to gain a greater sense of the participant's experiences and to achieve an exhaustive description of experiences that the participant may not recollect.

### **Relationship between Brianna's Study and the Present Study**

The study of Brianna on the topic Deaf persons in a hearing world: a qualitative study on cultural identity issues is related to the current study titled: effect of anti-audism on the social development of Deaf persons in that both studies seek to ensure that Deaf persons find their proper place in the hearing world. Both first look at the experiences of Deaf persons in a hearing world and seek to get hearing people especially those closest to them to be more positively involved in the lives of Deaf persons.

Adrian and Sarah conducted a study in 1984 on the topic: "Actual and Perceived Attitudes towards Deafness" in London using a quantitative research and a sample size of 54 subjects; 24 Deaf and 30 hearing people all selected from the general public. Three of the 54 participants were students; two hearing and one Deaf student (s). They used a Likert scale questionnaire for data collection. They

then applied a factor analysis and a two-way Deaf and hearing versus self and other. An ANOVA was then computed on the factor scores with predictable results.

The findings of their study revealed that hearing peers who had not been in contact with Deaf persons believed in the impossibility of a Deaf person to lead a normal and social life thereby making them to ignore Deaf persons. On the other hand, hearing subjects who had contacts with Deaf persons agreed that the totally Deaf persons are no harder to get along with than those with partial deafness. This group of respondent believed that Deaf people are usually easier to get along with than many people and are the same as everybody else; hence, there should not be special schools because they are capable of leading a normal life. Deaf subjects on their own part believed that Deaf persons are equal with everyone else. They also believe that Deaf persons are also sensitive concerning what others say about them and tend to hide their deafness because hearing people are always embarrassed about talking to Deaf people.

Adrian and Sarah concluded that the negative attribute scores of Deaf persons regarding the hearing on the factors examined were true reflection of the attitudes of hearing people that Deaf persons have encountered. Their Deaf subjects had had extensive contact with the hearing, whereas many of the hearing peers had not had contact with the Deaf, so the judgments by the Deaf was taken to be more realistic than those by the hearing. Adrian and Sarah judged that the scores of hearing subjects may be unrealistically positive and reflect only how they think they might behave towards a Deaf person in real life. Their judgment on the positive scores of hearing people reflects the assumption of the study at hand that many may not accept that the environment is deaf unfriendly whereas in actual sense it is. It would be constructive if the society builds on the scores from Deaf subjects to improve on societal behaviour towards Deaf persons. Adrian and Sarah made no recommendations on their study.

Adrian and Sarah's study clearly brings out the audist attitudes present in both hearing and Deaf persons regarding deafness. Their study reveals that audism is projected and promoted as the society prefers to employ the hearing leaving the Deaf unemployed and excluded from many normal and social activities. Such behaviours are forms of audism which lead them to develop a low self-image. The researcher in the present study seeks to promote anti-audism in her community by ensuring that there exists a deaf friendly environment.

Hazeltine conducted a study in 2007 on the topic: "A relational-exploratory study: how attitudes towards deafness affect quality of behavioral health services provided to the Deaf or hard of hearing clients" at Smith College in Northampton. Hazeltine made use of a quantitative research method and a survey research design in conducting her study. She made use of a questionnaire as instrument for data collection and the statistical package used for data analysis was an SPSS and Pearson Correlation Coefficient was run to summarize and describe the overall relationship. She also applied inferential statistics to assess group differences and T-tests were equally run to compare attitudes to level of training and knowledge of deafness. Her sample size was 86 participants from different professions.

The findings of her study showed significant difference in attitude score between those who had served a Deaf person and those who had not, which strongly suggests that the amount of contacts with anyone from the Deaf population directly correlates to attitude. As level of contacts increased, attitudes were more positive, implying that behavioural health workers who have less contacts with the Deaf or hard of hearing population will possess attitudes that are less desirable. With this knowledge, Hazeltine concluded that clinical services for individuals in this population might not be effective and appropriate. Those who had received training about deafness, including Deaf Culture, had more positive attitudes than those who never, thereby making a strong argument that training is required for those working in the field of behavioral health, without which the services rendered may be less accessible, less effective, less appropriate or a combination of all three. Hazeltine recommended that further research surrounding issues of communication should be conducted as it would benefit the Deaf and the hard of hearing community in general. Hazeltine emphasizes on the training of hearing people on aspects of deafness to ensure a more positive attitude and interaction

between hearing and Deaf persons. The present study thus seeks to introduce anti-audism by fostering an anti audist environment.

### Research Methodology

The study used a sequential explanatory research design based on the fact that the design combines elements of quantitative and qualitative research approaches in collecting and analyzing data for the study. The rationale for selecting the design was to ensure that the limitations of one type of data are balanced by the strength of the other, and to strengthen understanding, the design integrates different strategies to collect and analyze data.

In employing the sequential explanatory design, the hearing neighbours of Deaf persons on whom the quantitative instrument were administered were first of all trained on some basic signing skills which they were expected to be using to communicate with their Deaf neighbours. The outcome of that exercise was used for the subsequent qualitative phase which helped in understanding the results of the quantitative phase. The quantitative and the subsequent qualitative phases were both meant to promote anti-audism and to get its effects on the social development of Deaf persons in a hearing world.

### Research Findings

#### *Question: What Impact Does Anti-Audism Has on the Social Development of Deaf Persons?*

**Table 1: Perception of Anti-Audism and Social Development of Deaf Persons by Persons without Hearing Impairment**

Items	Stretched				Collapsed	
	Strongly Agree (SA)	Agree (A)	Disagree (D)	Strongly Disagree (SD)	SA/A	D/SD
Involving Deaf persons in our social activities can eradicate discrimination against them.	315 (76.6%)	87 (21.2%)	6 (1.5%)	3 (0.7%)	402 (97.8%)	9 (2.2%)
Having interpreters in our churches can make Deaf persons to feel included.	318 (77.4%)	87 (21.2%)	3 (0.7%)	3 (0.7%)	405 (98.5%)	6 (1.5%)
Making an effort to sign can help bridge the gap between Deaf and hearing people.	297 (72.3%)	114 (27.7%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	411 (100%)	0 (0.0%)
Identifying with Deaf persons makes them feel secure among hearing people.	282 (68.6%)	129 (31.4%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	411 (100%)	0 (0.0%)
Employing Deaf people also helps them display their abilities at job places.	267 (65.0%)	135 (32.8%)	6 (1.5%)	3 (0.7%)	402 (97.8%)	9 (2.2%)
Including Deaf people in social activities is believing that they can do anything.	216 (52.6%)	153 (37.2%)	18 (4.4%)	24 (5.8%)	369 (89.8%)	42 (10.2%)
Insisting that hearing people are not superior to the Deaf promotes social equality.	219 (53.3%)	159 (38.7%)	24 (5.8%)	9 (2.2%)	378 (92.0%)	33 (8.0%)
<b>Multiple Response Set (MRS)</b>	<b>1914 (66.5%)</b>	<b>864 (30.0%)</b>	<b>57 (2.0%)</b>	<b>42 (1.5%)</b>	<b>2778 (96.6%)</b>	<b>99 (3.4%)</b>

In aggregate, based on the respondents living or working in the same neighbourhood with Deaf persons' opinion on table 9 on anti-audism, majority of them, 96.6% indicated that anti-audism promotes social development of Deaf persons while 3.4% denied. Specifically, all the respondents,

100% (411) accepted that making an effort to sign can help bridge the gap between Deaf and hearing people and identifying with Deaf persons makes them feel secure among hearing people. Majority of the respondents, 98.5% (405) also indicated that having interpreters in our churches can make Deaf persons to feel included. In the same trend, 97.8% (402) of the respondents opined that involving Deaf persons in our social activities can kill discrimination against them and employing Deaf people also helps them display their abilities at job places. Furthermore, 92.0% (378) of the participants agreed that insisting that hearing people are not superior to the Deaf, promotes social equality. Finally, 89.8% (369) of the respondents accepted that including Deaf people in social activities is believing that they can do anything.

**Table 2 Hearing Persons' Perception of Anti-audism and Social Development of Deaf Persons by Demographic Information**

Demographic Information			Anti-Audism Perceived to Promote Social Development of Deaf Persons		Total based on MRS	Chi-Square Tests ( $\chi^2$ )
			Agree	Disagree		
Gender	Male	N	1272	9	1281	$\chi^2=7.54$ $p$ -value=0.006
		%	99.3%	0.7%		
	Female	N	1506	90	1596	
		%	94.4%	5.6%		
Age	Less than 21	N	897	6	903	$\chi^2=0.01$ $p$ -value=0.873
		%	99.3%	0.7%		
	20-30	N	1719	87	1806	
		%	95.2%	4.8%		
	31-40	N	120	6	126	
		%	95.2%	4.8%		
	41 and above	N	42	0	42	
		%	100.0%	0.0%		
Marital Status	Single	N	2064	99	2163	$\chi^2=3.51$ $p$ -value=0.061
		%	95.4%	4.6%		
	Married	N	714	0	714	
		%	100.0%	0.0%		
Level of Education	FSLC	N	567	0	567	$\chi^2=0.06$ $p$ -value=0.652
		%	100.0%	0.0%		
	O level	N	501	3	504	
		%	99.4%	0.6%		
	A level	N	1461	93	1554	
		%	94.0%	6.0%		
	HND	N	18	3	21	
		%	85.7%	14.3%		
	Bachelor's Degree	N	147	0	147	
		%	100.0%	0.0%		
Masters	N	63	0	63		
	%	100.0%	0.0%			
Occupation	Employed in Formal Sector	N	189	0	189	$\chi^2=0.04$ $p$ -value=0.641
		%	100.0%	0.0%		
	Self-Employed in Informal Sector	N	1038	12	1050	
		%	98.9%	1.1%		
	Student	N	1551	87	1638	
		%	94.7%	5.3%		

Comparing hearing persons' perception of anti-audism on social development of Deaf persons by demographic information, findings on table 2 shows that a majority of the respondents irrespective

of gender, age range, marital status, level of education and occupation with percentage range from 85.7% to 100% indicate that anti-audism promotes social development of Deaf persons in their neighbourhood.

### **How Deaf Persons Feel When Their Neighbours Take Out Time to Learn Sign Language**

Among the 13 Deaf persons interviewed for the study, all of them signed that they feel either happy, good or fine when they see their neighbours taking out time to learn sign language. Specifically, respondent one, three, six and 10 said, *"I feel good."* Respondent two said, *"I am happy..."* Respondent 7 and 8 also said, *"I feel so happy with them now than before..."* Another respondent in line with the respondents said, *"...I am happy, and added that the children learn faster..."* Finally the rest of the participants in the same view said, *"...I feel fine..."*. In a nutshell, Deaf persons feel happy, good and fine when their hearing neighbours take out time to learn sign language.

### **What Deaf Persons Do When Their Hearing Neighbours Sign a Word Wrongly**

Based on what the Deaf persons do when their hearing neighbours sign a word wrongly, a good number of them said they help their neighbours. For instance, respondent one, two, three, four, five and six in the same opinion said, *"...I help them to sign well..."* Respondent seven said, *"I show them how to sign the words correctly..."* Respondent eight equally said, *"...I rearrange their hands for them..."* Respondent nine, ten, eleven and thirteen in the same opinion said, *"I correct them and rearrange their hands"*. Finally, respondent twelve added that, *"I show them to sign again..."* In sum, Deaf persons correct and help their hearing neighbours when they sign a word wrongly.

### **How Deaf Persons Feel When They Help a Hearing Person Sign Correctly**

Based on how Deaf persons feel when they help a hearing person sign correctly, many in the same opinion said they feel fine. Specifically, respondent one and three said, *"...fine."* While respondents four, five, six, seven, eight, twelve and thirteen said, *"...We all feel happy, good..."* Furthermore, respondent nine said, *"...I feel moved to teach them more signs as we both are happy..."* The tenth respondent said, *".... I feel identified with and happy. They even want me to teach them more signs but, being in the market, there is no time..."* Finally, another respondent said *"...I feel happy and the hearing people are also happy when I correct them..."* Summarily, Deaf persons feel happy, good and glad to be identified with, and they begin to have a closer bond after helping their hearing neighbours to sign correctly.

### **Deaf Persons' Opinion When Hearing Persons Are Learning Sign Language**

Based on the Deaf persons' opinion when hearing persons are learning sign language, many of them said the hearing persons are beginning to erase the belief that they are superior to Deaf persons. In other words, they see them as equals as depicted in the statements below. Specifically, respondent one, two and three in similar opinion said, *"...hearing persons erase the belief that they are superior to Deaf persons...."* Another respondent said, *"hearing persons do not look down on them again..."* Furthermore, respondent five said, *"....hearing persons are gradually getting to see that Deaf people do not have a disability..."* Respondent six said, *"....they simply prove they are equal with us..."* Respondent ten said, *"... When hearing people learn sign language, it proves that everyone is the same..."* In the same opinion like that of respondent ten, the eleventh in number equally said, *"....It shows that hearing people see us as equal to them...."* Another respondent said, *"....It brings them closer to us and we are all equal..."*

On the other hand, some of the Deaf persons said hearing persons see themselves superior to those with Deafness. This could be seen as explained by the following participants. Respondent nine said *"....Some hearing people behave as if they are superior but they need to know it is just a language barrier...."*

In summary, anti-audism makes Deaf persons to feel happy, good, and fine and it helps change the belief of many hearing people to see themselves equal to those with Deafness.

### **Testing of Hypothesis**

**H<sub>a</sub>:** Anti audism has a significant impact on the social development of Deaf persons.

**H<sub>o</sub>:** Anti audism has no significant impact on the social development of Deaf persons.

**Table 3: Likelihood Ratio Test Depicting Possibility of Anti-audism Impacting Social Development of Deaf Persons**

Model	Model Fitting Criteria	Likelihood Ratio Tests			Pseudo R-Square (Nagelkerke)
	-2 Log Likelihood	Chi-Square	df	p-value	
Intercept Only	381.268				.290
Final	262.052	119.216	39	.000	
Contingency coefficient value	0.474				

Statistically, findings show on table 11 that, anti-audism has a significant impact on social development of Deaf persons ( $p$ -value  $< 0.001 < 0.05$ ) and the impact is moderate as indicated by a contingency coefficient value of 0.474. Furthermore, statistics revealed that anti-audism accounts for 29.0% (Pseudo R-Square = 0.290) to contribute on the social development of the Deaf persons. Thus, the null hypothesis was rejected while the alternative hypothesis which states that anti-audism has a significant impact on the social development of Deaf persons was accepted.

### Discussion of Findings

The discussion of findings was done based on the responses to the four research questions derived from the hearing and Deaf subjects who were sampled to participate in the study.

### Anti-Audism and the Social Development of Deaf Persons

Descriptively, above three quarters of the respondents indicated that anti-audism promotes social development of Deaf persons with an impact size which accounts for and contributes moderately to the social development of Deaf persons. Thus maintaining the positive assumption that anti-audism has a significant impact on the social development of Deaf persons. In support of the assumption, Deaf persons on whom the impact is exerted, expressed that they feel happy, good and fine when their hearing neighbours take out time to learn sign language and believing that Deaf persons and hearing people are equal.

Irrespective of gender, age range, marital status, level of education and occupation, the respondents indicated that anti-audism promotes social development of Deaf persons in their neighbourhood. This gives the impression that if the practice continues, anti-audism would gain grounds and would continue to positively impact the social development of Deaf persons. These findings show that wherever anti-audism practices prevail an environment void of discrimination follows, enabling Deaf people to socialize and develop like everyone else in the same neighbourhood without a broken relationship.

Unfortunately, despite these findings our communities are not void of audism as some of the Deaf persons pointed out that hearing persons see themselves as superiors to those with Deafness. In support to this statement, Noel (2021) found out that people believe Deaf people are incompetent, dependent and unproductive and as a result do not succeed in job interviews as most questions asked them are not based on competency, but on whether they could work without help from colleagues or communicate with colleagues. He equally found out that Deaf people encounter a systematic audism in which they are denied employment opportunities offered to hearing people. Even if recruitment is based on the ability to communicate with colleagues at work, just as the National Deaf Children's Society (2007) believes, there is always a way out to make everyone understand information.

Many Deaf persons are rejected not based on incompetency but simply based on their disabilities. People without disabilities do not know that persons with disabilities are capable of performing the same activities differently. What matters is to see that the activity is done and not the procedure employed. There are always many different ways to carry out a task. People need to learn and

understand that persons with disabilities are just differently able. Persons with disabilities always device a way to perform a task differently from the norm; for instance, some persons without hands are able to write with their toes and perform other tasks in other different ways. Each time people come across such exceptional persons they are always filled with awe, admiration and amazed at how skilful a person with disability accomplishes a task. What is more important is to focus on the task accomplished and not the means. So persons with disabilities are differently able.

Another instance where Deaf persons are downgraded is reported by Rhona & Helen (2008) where Deaf children are told by school teachers or parents that certain career options they are interested in would not be possible due to their deafness. They thereby convince a majority of Deaf persons to believe such negative prophesies that being deaf makes it not just difficult but impossible for them to find a job. Then the fact that most often after submitting an application for a job these Deaf persons are always never called up to come for an interview on numerous jobs applied for. From the responses of Deaf persons, one gathers that despite their deafness they are competent and qualified to be employed but the hearing people failed to focus on their abilities to perform the task. Instead of accommodating the communication needs of those Deaf persons, hearing people equate the Deaf people's inability to use speech to incompetency in jobs, thereby making their expectations to reflect the low expectations that hearing people do instil in Deaf persons.

Deaf persons aspire for the jobs because they believe in themselves and know they can do the job perfectly using same or a different method. Instead of going deeper into their world and seeing abilities in disabilities and embracing the beauty of performing an activity using several methods, hearing people tend to be so stereotyped in their judgment of these rare species of people with special abilities. So much is therefore left undone in our communities which only persons with disabilities could accomplished because of prejudgments.

It is also worth noting that the family, Deaf peers, school setting, and society are the most influential factors in the lives of Deaf persons in terms of positive or negative self-image (Brianna, 2008). There is a number of factors that affect the identity development of Deaf individuals who live in a hearing world, and as Bronfenbrenner (1979) in his ecological system theory says, the micro system is the setting in which an individual interacts actively and develops, and if the relationship in the micro system is broken the developing individual would lack the tools needed to explore other systems. When hearing people hold such stereotype behaviours that Deaf people cannot be productive members of the workforce they only make Deaf persons to have a negative self-esteem and a broken relationship with members of their micro system.

Prior to the learning of frequently used signs by hearing people in this study, they could not interact properly with their Deaf neighbours and the Deaf could not properly explore organs of the micro system like the churches for lack of interpreters talk less of other distant systems. Then the learning and usage of signs of frequently used words taught by the researcher, hearing neighbours of Deaf persons are beginning to accommodate the communication needs of Deaf people. They now sustain meaningful basic conversation with their Deaf neighbours thereby making the neighbourhood secure and accessible to Deaf people. This indicates that if hearing people become anti-audist in nature Deaf people would interact meaningfully and happily with their hearing neighbours, explore available opportunities without any bias and develop socially.

Many people view Deaf people and their education as inferior seeing them as being incapable of acquiring the same education as hearing students. Despite all the negative behaviours of hearing people towards Deaf persons as revealed in related studies, the current study proves that hearing people are not that bad. They just need to be educated to have a changed mentality and belief and they will bring out the good and signing ability embedded in them. As such they will begin to nurture a positive mindset concerning Deaf persons. As Jerome Brunner (1960) says in his theory of instruction, learners can learn more than they had customarily been expected to, inasmuch as they are offered appropriate guidance and resources. Many hearing persons believe that learning sign language is very difficult but the experiment of this study proves them wrong for the hearing people

were able to learn signs of the most frequently used words and put them to practice which enable them to give a significant positive response regarding the impact of anti-audism on the social development of Deaf persons.

### **Recommendations**

With respect to findings of the study, the following recommendations were made to special education scholars: it should be ensured that hearing people especially those who live in the same neighbourhood with Deaf persons try to unpack their hearing privileges and embrace Deaf persons as fellow human beings.

### **Implications of the Study**

In promoting anti-audism, the society recognizes Deaf persons as fellow human beings embedded with great potentials and becomes mindful of them in every aspect of life thereby ensuring that they receive quality education and develop their skills in respect to the needs of the society and be treated indiscriminately. In response Deaf persons would become qualified to compete in the job market with members of the society to render the services required by the society. The prevalence of equal access to opportunities will now push Deaf persons to pursue their education further and no longer to see education as a waste of time, resources and effort.

### **Suggestion for further study**

Among others given that audism is the belief that hearing people are superior to Deaf persons, spoken language superior to sign language and that to be considered a complete human being one must be able to hear and use speech to communicate, it will also be good to conduct a study on the prevalence of audism and its impact on the self-esteem of Deaf persons.

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